

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 19 and 20 without prejudice and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A lens ~~Lens~~-system for a plurality of charged particle beams, comprising:
at least two lens modules (~~100, 200, 301~~), each comprising a first pole piece, a second pole piece and at least one opening (~~22~~) for a charged particle beam; and
at least one excitation coil (~~24, 106~~) providing a magnetic flux to the at least two lens modules, wherein ~~whereby~~ each lens module constitutes a component.
2. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ one charged particle beam travels through each of the openings, thereby being focused in a lens field area.
3. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein the center of each opening provides an optical axis (~~24~~) and wherein ~~whereby~~ a lens field corresponding to each opening has at least two planes of symmetry (~~102, 104~~) with respect to its optical axis.
4. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein ~~any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the openings of all lens modules sharing one excitation coil form a row of openings.
5. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein ~~any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ at least four openings are provided within one row, thereby increasing symmetry for each opening with respect to its optical axis.
6. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein ~~any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the at least one excitation coil has a non-circular shape.

7. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby the at least one excitation coil (21) has substantially the shape of a rectangle with rounded edges.
8. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, further comprising any of the preceding claims, whereby at least two lens rows, (130) each comprising an excitation coil; and at least two lens modules are arranged next to each other to form a two-dimensional arrangement of openings (22).
9. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein the any of the preceding claims, whereby at least two lens modules are arranged to form a two-dimensional arrangement of at least four openings, and thereby sharing one excitation coil.
10. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby the openings for the charged particle beams ~~particles~~ have at least in one direction a distance with respect to each other of about 10 mm to about 90 mm, ~~preferably of about 30 mm to 65 mm.~~
11. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 9, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby each row of lens modules is terminated at its ends by a shielding plate (702).
12. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby each lens module is positioned in relation to an adjacent module by providing a gap (62) of about 0.1 mm to 3mm.
13. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 12, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby the gap contains a non-magnetic material (64).

14. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby each lens module comprises magnetic flux shaping openings ~~(82)~~.
15. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 1, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby for each magnetic sub-lens, an electrostatic immersion lens is provided.
16. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 15, wherein any of the preceding claims, whereby each electrostatic immersion lens comprises at least two electrodes ~~(92,94)~~.
17. (Currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ for manufacturing a lens system, comprising: ~~the steps of~~
 manufacturing a plurality of lens modules, each comprising a first pole piece, a second pole piece and at least one opening for a charged particle beam; and
 providing a common excitation coil for at least two lens modules.
18. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 17, wherein ~~whereby~~ each module is manufactured by first providing a cylindrical intermediate product and then flattening at least two sides of the cylindrical intermediate product.
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently amended) A lens ~~Lens~~-system for a plurality of charged particle beams, comprising:
an excitation coil ~~(21)~~ providing a magnetic flux to a pole piece unit~~[[;]]~~ having
~~the pole piece unit (501) comprising a first pole piece, a second pole piece and at least two openings (22) for charged particle beams; and~~
wherein ~~whereby~~ the two openings are arranged in one row, thereby forming a lens row; and
wherein ~~whereby~~ the pole piece unit has an elongated shape.
22. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein
~~whereby~~ the excitation coil ~~(21; 106)~~ has a non-circular shape.
23. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein ~~any of claims 21 to 22, whereby~~ the excitation coil has a rectangular shape with rounded edges.
24. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 23, wherein
~~whereby~~ the edges are rounded such that the sides of the rectangular shape form a semi-circle.
25. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein ~~any of claims 21 to 24, whereby~~ at least four openings ~~(22), preferably at least seven openings,~~ are provided within one row, thereby increasing symmetry for each opening with respect to its optical axis~~(24)~~.
26. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein ~~any of claims 21 to 25, whereby~~ one charged particle beam travels through each of the openings, thereby being focused in the lens field area.
27. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein ~~any of claims 21 to 26, whereby~~ the center of each opening ~~(22)~~ provides an optical axis

(24) and whereby a lens field corresponding to each opening has substantially at least two planes of symmetry (102, 104) with respect to its optical axis.

28. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein any of ~~claims 21 to 27, whereby~~ at least two lens rows, each comprising an excitation coil, are arranged next to each other to form a two-dimensional arrangement of openings.
29. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein any of ~~claims 21 to 28, whereby~~ the openings for the charged particle beams ~~particles~~ have at least in one direction a distance with respect to each other of about 10 mm to 90 mm, ~~preferably of about 30 mm to 65 mm.~~
30. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein any of ~~claims 21 to 29 whereby~~ each lens row is terminated at its ends by a shielding plate (160; 702).
31. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein any of ~~claims 21 to 30, whereby~~ the pole piece unit (501) comprises magnetic flux shaping openings (82).
32. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 21, wherein any of ~~claims 21 to 31, whereby~~ for each magnetic sub-lens, an electrostatic immersion lens is provided.
33. (Currently amended) The lens ~~Lens~~-system according to claim 32, wherein ~~whereby~~ each electrostatic immersion lens comprises at least two electrodes (92, 94).
34. (Currently amended) A multiple ~~Multiple~~-charged particle beam device, comprising:
a charged particle beam source;
a detector for detecting secondary particles;

beam shaping means;
a housing for the charged particle beam column, wherein ~~whereby~~ the housing can be evacuated;
at least one lens system comprising; ~~according to any of claims 1 to 16 or 21 to 33.~~
at least two lens modules, each comprising a first pole piece, a second pole piece and at least one opening for a charged particle beam; and
at least one excitation coil providing a magnetic flux to the at least two lens modules, wherein each lens module constitutes a component.